

6798
*The RESTORATION to be had in
Remembrance.*

A
SERMON

Preached at the

Cathedral Church

OF

Saint P A U L,

In L O N D O N,

On Tuesday the 29th of May, 1722.

By J O S E P H W A T S O N, D. D.

Rector of St. *Stephen Walbrook.*

Published by Order of the Right Honourable the
Lord M A Y O R and Court of A L D E R M E N.

L O N D O N:

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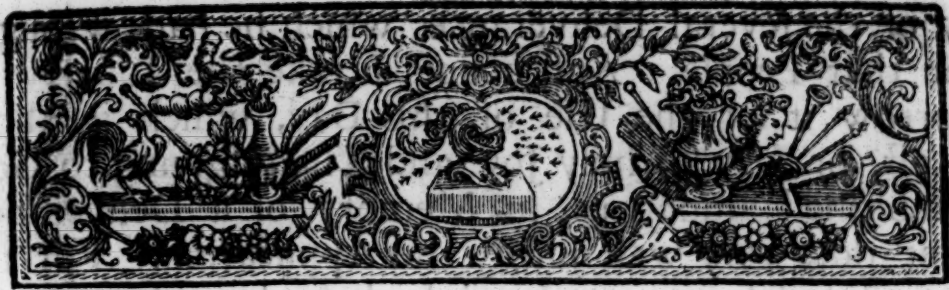
Stuart, Mayor.

Martis *xii.* Die Junij 1722. Annoque Regis Georgij Magnæ Britanniaë, &c. Octavo.

I*T is ordered, that the Thanks of this Court be given to the Reverend Dr. Watson, for his Sermon preached before this Court and the Livery Men of the several Companies of this City, at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, on the twenty ninth of May last, being the Day appointed by Act of Parliament, for an Anniversary Thanksgiving for the Restitution of the Royal Family, and Restoration of the Government, and that he be desired to print the same.*



STRACEY.



PSALM cxi. v. 4.

*The merciful and gracious Lord hath
so done his marvelous works, that
they ought to be had in remembrance.*

Or as you read in the new Translation

*He hath made his wonderful works to
be remembred ; the Lord is gracious
and full of compassion.*



It does not appear that this Psalm was composed on any particular Occasion, but rather that it is a general and devout Acknowledgment of the Righteousness of God's Providence, with Respect to the whole World, and of the never failing Mercy and Benignity of the same, with Respect to his own People.

The Text however is thought by Interpreters to point at the Passover, and other Feasts, which God had instituted among the Jews, to perpetuate the Memo-

ry of the several Deliverances which he had wrought for that People. And hence I take the Liberty to borrow it for the Use of this Day, which is also a Feast, or Day of holy Joy and Thanksgiving to God, established among us, in Memory of a Deliverance, that does very well justify the Application. For the merciful and gracious Lord hath so done this marvellous Work also, that it ought to be had in Remembrance.

I must crave your Attendance then, while I endeavour to stir you up to the Duty of remembering it, by a Method suggested to me in the Text, *viz.* 1st, By representing to you how merciful and gracious the Lord hath been to us in it. 2^{dly}, By letting you see how justly we may look upon it to be a marvellous Work; a Work in which the Hand of God did appear in so visible and extraordinary a manner, that very little of it could be ascribed to human Means; and when I have so engaged you to bear it in Remembrance, I shall in the third and last Place humbly offer my Thoughts, how that may be done by us in the best manner.

First I am to represent to you how merciful and gracious the Lord hath been to us in the great Deliverance of this Day. To *us* I say, for though by much the greatest Part of this Generation was unborn, when that Deliverance was wrought; yet, it is plain, we owe to it all that is valuable in our present Establishment. Nor are we under the less Obligation for the Mercy that was shewn in it, because we were not personally concerned in the Wickedness that preceded; for when God propounded his Laws to Man he expressly reserved to himself the Right of *Visiting the*

* Exod. xx. 5.

Sins of the Fathers upon the Children, to the third and fourth Generation of them that hate him. And yet this was no effect of Cruelty in him, as it would seem, but the contrary; because he makes hereby the natural Affection we have to the Welfare of our own Offspring, which is one of the most powerful Principles within us, instrumental to our Obedience, and consequently to our Happiness. *i. e.* He makes it impossible for us to incur his Displeasure, wherein all our Unhappiness consists, without being cruel and unnatural at the same Time to our own Flesh and Blood.

Besides, he hath so ordered the Course of this World, that the Consequences of Parents Sins must unavoidably fall heavy upon their Descendents in many Cases, and in none more evidently so, than in the national Evils they may have occasioned, whether they be such as naturally proceed from their Folly and Wickedness, or they carry in them some yet more visible Marks of a divine Vengeance, because a Nation can hardly be supposed to consist of the same Individuals for a Day, or so much as an Hour together; and yet every Evil that befalls it, as a Nation, by what Means or from what Cause soever it has proceeded, must in one Degree or other affect them all. Unless therefore we could suppose that Almighty God would suspend his Truth and Justice, so as *never* to visit any Nation, *as such*, for its Wickedness; or that he would invert the Order of his Providence, so as Things should not be attended with their usual and natural Effects; it must be expected, in Cases of this Nature more especially, that Children shall bear the Iniquities of their Fathers, and consequently it ought to be esteemed not a Debt, but a Mercy shewn to any People, how innocent soever they may take themselves to be, when it pleases God to remove from them
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any publick Judgments, even though their Fathers Sins, and not their own, had introduced them.

For these and such like Reasons, I shall consider the past and present Generations as one and the same People, and speak of the Deliverance which this Day brought forth, as an Act of as great Mercy to *us* who live at this Distance, as if we had been the guilty Instruments of the several Miseries from which it freed us : Miseries which may we never feel again, nor ever have Cause to remember, otherwise than as they enter into the Thanksgiving of this Day, and serve to illustrate the great Goodness and Mercy of God to a sinful People in the glorious Event of it.

And this is the only Use I propose by the mention I shall make of them at this Time. In Order whereto give me leave to set before you, how justly we had deserved them.

We were freed then this Day from Rapine, Plunder, Bloodshed and Oppression of all Kinds, with which we had long been harass'd, the natural Effects of Liberty and Property unguarded : As this also was, and ever will be, the Effect of a Government founded in Violence ; the same Measures being always necessary to support such Governments which at first erected them. But had not we richly deserved all this for the unreasonable, the wicked Revenge we had taken upon the Person of our Royal Sovereign, a most excellent Prince, for a few Mistakes in his Government, which all the World saw were not committed by him with any evil Intent ? He was rather driven upon them through the Necessity of his Affairs, which Necessity too was in a great Measure owing to the Artifices of those very Persons who most condemned his Mistakes, and laboured, all the Ways they could, to improve them to his Ruin.

Nay

Nay had not we deserved more than all we suffered, when we would not return to our Obedience, after every Thing we had the least Reason to complain of, and many Things, which were complained of without Reason, were given up to appease us: but carried on our unchristian Resentments, till we had spilt a great deal of the best Blood of the Nation, and totally dissolved the Frame of our ancient and well constituted Government, by an Act of unparallel'd Villany, the publick and avowed Execution of a sovereign Prince in his own Dominions, and by the Hands of his own Subjects: an Act from which the *Protestant* Name and Cause hath derived a Stain, which their Enemies will ever look upon with Pleasure?

We were freed this Day not only from the Miseries before named, the never failing Consequences of usurp'd, arbitrary, and unsettled Governments, but also, which was no small Aggravation of them, and consequently a Circumstance in our Deliverance not to be overlooked, from having them inflicted upon us, for the most Part, by the meanest, and as it were by the Refuse of the People.

Oppression is a grievous Thing, from whatsoever Hand it comes; no Greatness or Superiority, no former Favours or Obligations can make us easy with it, when once we apprehend it; but it never grates harder upon us, than when we suffer it from Inferiors; when they domineer and tyrannise over us, whom the Laws of God and Man, before they had suffered Violence, had placed in a State of Subjection and Vassalage. And yet this was our very Case, ^b *the Evil which Solomon had seen under the Sun as an error that proceedeth from the ruler had happen'd to us also: folly was set in great*

^b Eccl. x. 5, 6, 7.

dignity, and the rich sat in low places, servants rode upon horses, and princes walked as servants on the earth.

But was not this a just return for that Frowardness and Impatience, that Contempt, Insolence, and Rebelliousness, wherewith we had behaved our selves towards our gracious and lawful Sovereign, the mildest and best natured of Princes, and the exceeding great Derision wherein we had held both the kingly Name and Power? Was it not indeed the natural Result of the many seditious Appeals, that were ever and anon made to the Populace, to create Jealousies that might perplex and confound all the Measures he could take, for the Peace and Happiness of his Government? For it was an Inference the People could hardly avoid making, that if they were worthy upon all Occasions to be appealed to by their Governors, they might sometime see Cause to prevent the Reason of those Appeals, by taking Matters into their own Hands, and governing themselves.

With respect to Religion we were freed also from the grossest Hypocrisy in the Practice, from the wildest extremes of Error and Enthusiasm in the Profession of it. For as our Morals never needed a Disguise more, than while we were engaged in the Rebellion, which this Day put an End to, so we had put on the Appearance of Religion with so much Care, and worn it as a Cloak so long, that we had almost lost all regard for the Substance: And as the Humour of those Times was such, that he was sure to be had in the highest Esteem, who made the greatest Noise and Stir about Religion; so this encouraged Men to be new-fangled and opinionated in it, by which Means Error multiplied it self upon us apace, and we had soon got almost as many different Ways to Heaven, as Guides,
and

and they were not a few, that pretended to conduct us thither.

Thus stood the Case with us as to Religion before this joyful Day appeared. And though it must with Shame be confess'd, that we did not improve the gracious Means and Opportunities of Reformation, which it brought along with it, to the Degree we might have done, and is still to be wished for ; yet it was soon visible, that there was an Alteration for the better.

The Hypocrisy of the preceding Times presently appeared in its own odious Colours, and we avoided every Thing that looked like a Shew of Religion, with a Care more than sufficient. The vile Maxims and Politicks upon which we had lately acted, were in the utmost Disgrace, and, for the bitter Effects they had produced, renounced with a general Abhorrence. The Word of God came again to be handled with Learning and Sincerity, and was no longer made a *stumbling block to our Feet*, but *gave light unto our paths*. His Priests, his Altars, and the Beauty of his Worship were again restored to us, after they had suffered, almost beyond Hope of Recovery, all imaginable Despoil and Profanation.

And what had we for our Parts done to deserve all this Mercy ? Nay rather what had we not done to justify the Continuance of the heavy Judgments from which it freed us ? For if prostituting the Word of God to serve the most abominable Purposes, even to the sanctifying of Rebellion and Regicide, Robbery and Murther, Sacrilege, Perjury, and every other wicked Thing our Hearts could lust after, were justly punished by that Spirit of Hypocrisy and religious Delusion, which had taken such strong hold on us : If vi-

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lifying,

lifying, reproaching, and destroying the Hierarchy of Christ's Church, as it was settled by his Apostles, and by his good Providence planted and preserved in this Nation: If shedding the Blood of him whom God had set at the Head of it, for his Constancy to the Truth, and his undaunted Zeal for the House and Ordinances of the Lord: If plundering, sequestering, imprisoning and every other way persecuting all the rest of the loyal and orthodox Clergy of the Land, making not only their Loyalty and Orthodoxy, but their very Learning a Crime in them, were not improperly or undeservedly resented by the numberless Errors and Distractions that were suffered to prevail over God's pure Religion, and the Regularity and Comeliness of his Worship; as also by the many illiterate, presumptuous, and unauthorised Mechanicks, who took upon them to officiate as his Ministers: If these Things I say were justly requited by these Evils, and they seem very well suited to each other: These Things we had done, and therefore had nothing in *Justice* to expect, but to abide by their woful Consequences.

And it is far from being our Duty, whatever some may imagine, when we are celebrating the Praises of this Day, either to pass over in Silence, or by soft and extenuating Expressions, to dissemble the Wickedness of the Times we refer to; for that were in a great Measure to eclipse the Glory of the Day, by narrowing the View we ought to take of the great Mercy and Goodness of God, in the Scene which it opened to us.

But 2^{dly}, We are to esteem the great Event of this Day, not only as a gracious but a marvelous Work, a Work in which the Hand of God appeared

ed in so visible and extraordinary a manner, that little of it could be ascribed to human Means. For how else shall we account for that surprising turn, which the Minds of the People took all at once towards calling back their King?

They had indeed no Cause to be fond of the several Experiments they had made of governing without one; but then they had taken all the Ways they could to put it out of their Power even to wish for his Return. For in the first Place, they had not only publicly arraigned and condemned all kingly Government in their Speeches and Writings, but actually murdered it in the Person of their late Sovereign; and for fear the Ghost thus laid should one Time or other rise again to be revenged of them, they had by solemn Leagues, Ordinances and Abjurations for ever utterly renounced all Allegiance to it.

Nor was their Aversion to kingly Government more remarkable, than their Hatred to the Family that laid Claim to it; with whom they had such a grievous Arrear of Malice and Wickedness to account for, that their very Safety seemed to require of them rather to extirpate the whole, than to restore any Branch of it. And yet notwithstanding all these Impediments, insuperable as they seemed to be, the Hearts even of such as had been the most fierce and implacable against the Royal Cause and Family, were on a sudden, (how, God himself best knows) become almost universally loyal, and wished for the King's Return, with as much Eagerness and Impatience, as before they had sought to destroy him. So that no sooner was the happy Overture made for his Restoration, but there appeared such a zealous Emulation

for it through Lords and Commons ; City and Country, that, as the noble Historian observes * “ A
 “ Man could not but wonder where those People
 “ dwelt that had done all the Mischief, and kept the
 “ King so many Years from enjoying the Comfort and
 “ Support of such excellent Subjects.

The marvellousness of the Event farther appears, when we consider the Conduct of the Person who had the Honour to be the main Instrument in it. I would not willingly detract from the Merit of that great Man, but it can't be denied, that he had shewed himself a Man of Fortune, by deserting the Royal Cause in its Declension, and engaging deep, in Appearance at least, in the contrary Interest. Nay, it is far from being clear in History, that he did not heartily engage in it, or that he had any Design ever to serve the King, after that Desertion, 'till Providence had so ordered Matters, that his Restoration was become, in all Respects, the wisest Part for him to act † ; and if some Accounts may be credited, he had publicly protested not many Weeks before the Restoration, “ That
 “ he would oppose to the utmost, the setting up of
 “ *Charles Stuart*, a single Person, or House of Peers. Nay, ‡ one Author has it that he had actually consented to take the Government upon himself at the Instance of the *French Court*, but was defeated in that Design by an odd kind of Discovery.

Now if these Things be so, it is plain that there was not so much of human Contrivance as the Providence of God, in the Issue of this Day.

* See *Clar. Hist. Book 16. p. 761. 8^{vo}.*

† See *Echard's History of England, Book 3. Chap. 3. pag. 756. 12. of Char. 2^d.*

‡ *Mr. Lock as quoted by the foresaid Author in the same Book and Chap. p. 758.*

But after all, whatsoever the Designs of this great Man were, whether in Favour of a Restoration or no, such were the Circumstances of our publick Affairs at that Time, that it was impossible to be effected without some extraordinary Turns and Dispositions; such as the Hand of the Almighty alone could give. For if he did intend it, yet he had so many Difficulties to go through by reason of their Jealousy, and known Aversion to the Design, who were then at the Helm, that he must have drop'd it, had not Providence concurred in it beyond all Expectation. If he did not intend it, but was contriving only his own Advancement, considering the then disjointed State of the Government, and the Forces he had under his Command, sufficiently attached to him, how averse soever they might be to the King; it must be owned on the other Hand that Providence was exceeding watchful to disappoint him.

In whatsoever Light therefore we view the Conduct of this renowned General, whether as designing the Restoration or not; and I will not undertake to say positively how it was; we can't but see the Hand of God so plainly and remarkably conducting it thro' so many Obstacles and Discouragements, that we may justly pronounce it a marvelous Work.

Nor were the Consequences which immediately followed it less marvelous than the Event it self. It was very strange that we should so readily give up the several Principles and Views we had so obstinately adhered to both in civil and religious Matters, and so easily fall back, as we did, into the old Forms, against which we had been so implacably incensed. It is true we had hit upon nothing that we had reason to like better; but still Pride, and a regard to false Honour
and

and Reputation, do usually keep Men back from owning their Errors, longer than it happen'd to us in this Case, even when they see them ever so plainly ; especially when the owning of their Errors must be attended with an actual embracing again of those very Things, which they had in the most publick and authentick manner for ever renounced, and put from them with the utmost Disdain and Contempt, as we had done with Respect to almost every Part of our ancient Constitution : Yet notwithstanding all this, so powerfully did the Hand of Heaven operate in smoothing the Way for our Return to it, that it was done with the greatest Alacrity, and as much Expedition too, as the sad Confusions we had run our selves into would admit of ; for within the compass of a few Weeks, we had our *Judges restored as at the first, and our Counsellors as at the beginning* : And nothing was wanting on the Part of Heaven to make us *the City of Righteousness, the faithful City*.

If I am thought singular in ascribing so great a Share of this Work so immediately to Providence, when the Wisdom of a victorious General, the perpetual and immoveable Fidelity of the Royal Party, the Hands and Tongues, the Hearts and Wishes of three Kingdoms so eminently concurred in it *. Let the Words of a great Man acquit me, who speaking of this Affair, illustrates the Truth of what I say, by this Comparison. “ It was in that, says he, as in a “ sudden Land-Flood, which as it comes down, carries with it Trees, Stones, and Houses, and “ all that it meets in the Way, and even all these,

* Isa. i. 26.

* See Echard's *Hist. of Eng.* 12. Charles 2^d. p. 771.

which

“ which lay before quiet, nay, which resisted the first
 “ Waters while they were weak, do add to the Impetuosity of the Current, when it is going. But
 “ we must not therefore say, that it took its Rise from
 “ thence, seeing it was in Truth caused by Rain coming down from Heaven.” And I may add, the
 Rain came down when we did not expect it, when there were none of the Signs and Tokens that usually forewarn us of such Things.

And if this Authority is not sufficient, I appeal to the Sense of the Church it self upon this Matter, as it is expressed in these Words. “ Not our Foresight
 “ but thy Providence; not our own Arm, but thy
 “ right Hand, and thine Arm, and the Light of thy
 “ Countenance, did rescue and deliver us, even because
 “ thou hadst a Favour unto us.

It would be a pleasing Task, and very proper for me now, to enquire into what succeeded on our Part, after Heaven had finished this Redemption for us, could I hope to find it answerable to the Obligation; but as the Case in that respect stands with us, I am persuaded it will consist better with the Duty of the Day, to apply my self immediately to the third and last Thing I proposed; which was humbly to offer my Thoughts as to the Manner, in which the *gracious and marvelous Work*, whereof we now rejoice, may be best had in Remembrance by us for the future.

And first we are most certainly right in this our anniversary publick and national Thanksgiving for the same. For to say as some Puritans do, that the appointing of such Days as this is an Encroachment upon the fourth Commandment, wherein it is said, *six Days shalt thou labour*, is to understand that for an
 Injunction,

Injunction, which is only a Permission; as plainly appears, by the solemn Feasts which God himself established, each of them at least of a Week's Continuance: For it cannot be imagined that he would contradict his own Commandment by a contrary Institution.

This was the Way the *Jewish* Church reasoned upon it: They thought, he had no more restrained them, by hallowing one Day in seven, from hallowing others, as Occasions happen'd, than he had from Free-Will Offerings, by challenging the ^d *tenth of all their increase*. Nay from his own Example they were sure he had not, and accordingly they undertook to add to the Festivals of his appointing, several others of their own; as the Dedication of the Temple, the Feast of *Purim*, &c.

And so far was our blessed Saviour from reprov- ing them in this, that we find him present at one of them himself, as doubtless we should at all the rest, had every particular Passage of his Life been transmitted to us.

But besides the several Warrants we have for this Practice from the holy Scriptures, the Nature of the Thing it self makes it highly reasonable and necessary. For shall not publick and national Deliverances be publickly and nationally acknowledged? Shall not one Day in a Year be set apart, for the devout commemorating of a Mercy, to which we owe the Peace and Happiness of all the rest of our Days? If this be not strictly due, then Gratitude is no longer a Debt from Man to God. But this, I trust, we shall always be persuaded, is the justest Debt, nor ever fail to give

^d Lev. xxvii. 32.

the Proof we now give of that Persuasion, but as the Act for the Day directs, "Be in all succeeding Ages, "ready annually to celebrate the same, by rendring our "heartly publick Praises and Thanksgivings to Almighty "God, for all the extraordinary Mercies, Blessings, and "Deliverances received, and mighty Acts done there- "on, declaring the same to all the People assembled, "and to the Generations yet to come, that so they "may ever praise the Lord for this his marvelous "Goodness, whose Name alone is excellent, and his "Praise above the Earth and Heavens.

Thus far the Act; the design whereof is only to prescribe a proper Behaviour for this Day; whereas I should fall much short of what I have undertaken, should I content my self with this, and not advise you farther, that God expects an habitual Remembrance of all his Mercies, by a Life led, through the Sense of them, constantly conformable to his holy Will, as well as an occasional one, how frequently soever it may return, or how devoutly soever it may be solemnised.

This latter Part, as we have already observed, is a very proper and necessary one, but it is so chiefly by reason of its Subserviency to the former. For, as on the one Hand, if we should not set apart some particular Seasons, for the more solemn Acknowledgment of God's special Benefits to us, they would probably lose the good Influence which they ought to have upon our whole Conversation: So, on the other, if the Fruits of this good Influence do not appear, all the occasional Devotions we can perform on such Accounts, will only be esteemed as so many formal Mockeries.

Neither is *this Kind* of Remembrance perfectly adequate, to what God Almighty expects in these Cases.

For, as we are given to understand by our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, that every Duty has its specifick Blessing, *i. e.*, though *God withholdeth no good thing from them that lead a godly life*, but rewardeth all good Men with all Blessings promiscuously; yet every Duty hath some one particular Blessing, which it hath a more apparent, reasonable, and natural Claim to, than to any other: Not independent on the Promise of God do I mean, but abstractedly considered from it: So all the Mercies and Blessings which God bestows upon us, have their specifick Duties, which they do more visibly and immediately point at, though they do undoubtedly oblige us to all.

The Duties, which this Day's Deliverance doth more directly oblige to, are all such as contribute to the begetting and preserving both of a religious and civil Unity among us, since it was the notorious Violation of these Duties, that made that Deliverance so necessary to us.

And among these I would more particularly recommend to you, a Watchfulness against the Encroachment of those seditious and antimonarchical Principles, which are at this Time so publicly profess'd and espoused. When popular Discontents are arisen among us, with or without Cause, it makes no Difference: Then is the Time for those bitter Enemies to our Country's Weal, the Authors and Patrons of these Principles to sow their Tares. They consider all Men as naturally inclined to revenge; they know they will often strive to execute it at their utmost Peril, and to their greatest Detriment; and the Principles these Men profess, all tending vehemently that Way; no Time

• Psalm lxxxiv. 11.

they

they rightly judge so proper to propose and recommend them, as when Men's Spirits are ruffled and provoked with any Kind either of real, or imaginary Oppression.

Such an Opportunity they laid hold on in the beginning of our Royal Martyr's Troubles, and such an one they persuade themselves they have got now. Be it so ; yet I hope we have not so perfectly forgot the Use they made of those Discontents, as to suffer them to foment any there may be at present, to the same deplorable Issue.

Kingly Government is generally esteemed the best ; we of this Nation could never long endure any other, and we see no Cause to envy those Countries where other Forms have obtained. But no Man ever said, or thought, that Errors could not be committed, even where kingly Government is ; they that have carried their Praises of it highest, have only said, that it is liable to the fewest. Is it reasonable therefore, when such Things happen, that we should quarrel immediately with our Constitution ? Is there no Difference between the Constitution of a Government, and the Administration of it ? And is there no correcting a Mistake in the latter, without undoing the former ? Must all Kings be Tyrants, all their Subjects Slaves, because the Counsel which they follow, may sometimes prove unfortunate ? And does this justify the assassinating or deposing of Kings ? or give every Man a Right to assert his Liberty and Property in the Way he likes best ? Were this a fair Way of arguing, we could easily retort it back with Advantage, upon any other Model of Government, which the Enemies of ours are pleased to prefer.

And now I have taken upon me to be particular, I must not omit saying, That I think it highly necessary also, to the Remembrance we ought to have of this Day, that we should upon all Occasions shew our selves truly zealous for our holy Religion ; that pure reformed Religion, I mean, which is profess'd in this our established *Protestant* Church. For it was not the least of those Mercies which we received on this Day, that, by the Event of it, Enthusiasm had its Downfall, and Popery, which had been secretly at Work by it, was by that Means put farther from us. It cannot therefore be an unfuitable Return for us to make, but much the contrary, to endeavour by all the prudent Methods Christianity admits of, to preserve and propagate that Faith and Worship, which Heaven did as on this Day, with so many signal Marks of its Approbation, rescue and restore to us.

^f It is recorded to the Honour of that good King *Josiah*, when *Hilkiah* the Priest had found the Book of the Law, after it had been lost or suppressed, during the Reigns of several idolatrous Princes, that he no sooner heard the Words of it read, but he made this Reflection upon it: *Great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book:* And then went, he and all his People, into the House of the Lord, and *made a Covenant before him: to walk after the Lord, and to keep all his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all their heart, and with all their souls that were written therein.*

Now as it can hardly be doubted, but that the

^f 2 Chron. chap. xxxiv.

Wrath of God came upon us also, for the Abuses of that holy Religion, which he was pleased as on this Day to bring to light again, after it had been as effectually hid from us, as the Law, which *Hilkiab* recovered, was from the Jews; so it will become us to imitate the good Example, which *Josiah* and his People set on that Occasion, now we are also in the House of the Lord, in binding our Souls by holy Vows and Resolutions, for this his Mercy's sake, never more to repeat those Abuses, never more to betray God's sacred Truths for the Sake of any worldly Ends, but to assert and defend them at all Times with all our Might, and at all Adventures. *For & after all, that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our Iniquities deserve, and hast given us such a deliverance as this, should we again break thy commandments, and deliver up as heretofore thine honour and heritage to the spoiler : wouldst not thou be angry with us, till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping ?*

I press this Advice the more at this Time, because under a Notion of appeasing and smoothing Men's Minds, with respect to some Controversies in Religion, Truth and Error have of late been plausibly represented as indifferent Things, even in the Sight of God, if there be but an equal Degree of Sincerity in each; but with or without it, (for it is impossible for Men perfectly to judge in such a Matter) as to the Countenance that ought to be given to them by human Powers.

Now how good soever this Expedient may be, for

^s Ezra ix. 13, 14.

the Purposes for which it is intended, in the Sense of the Men of this World: Sure I am, that it is neither consistent with the Duty we owe to Almighty God, for the Revelation of himself to Mankind, nor with that which we owe to him on the Account of this Day's Deliverance.

But for my Part I take it to be an Expedient that will deceive every one that listens to it ; for was it ever known, that such Doctrine was taught by any Set of Men, longer, than till they had advanced what they would have to be the Truth, into a Condition to suppress every Thing that would oppose it? It serves therefore only to disturb Notions already established, in order to establish others, that will give more Offence, and yet be as inflexibly insisted on.

But to return, and bring all I would say under this Head, into a narrow Compass. If we would keep the Mercy of this Day duly in Remembrance, we must examine and see what the Sins were, which contributed chiefly to the Calamities it put an End to, and use our utmost Diligence to avoid them. We must weigh and consider well the many Blessings and Advantages it restored to us, and with Hearts full of Gratitude to God for the same, exert our best Endeavours to preserve and improve them: Both which Points I am persuaded will be sufficiently taken Care of, when we have through the Grace of God resolved upon these two Things, *viz.* To be as good Subjects as the Laws of our civil Government require, and as good Christians as the Rules and Doctrines of our Church will make us. For as we had never known the Sorrows we have been speaking of, if this had been done before; so, if we would be truly thankful for their Removal, we must take Care to do it now, since Repentance is ever best shewn by Reformation, and Gratitude by Obedience.

And

And considering how much we commonly value our selves upon these two Things, we should not need much Persuasion methinks to let the World see, that we make not our Boasts for nothing.

We have, it is true, a most excellent Church ; the Gospel, we may without Vanity say, is taught and profess'd in it with greater Purity, than it is in any part of the World besides ; and this we are upon all Occasions ready to say, nor do I discommend any one for it. But then let it be remembred, that while we are saying this, we are publishing our Obligations to excel in the Practice, as much as we do in the Profession of the Gospel, and that we boast of the one with a very ill Grace, if the other is not answerable to it.

They that are bred up in this Church, and profess the greatest Zeal for the Honour and Interest of it, have always thought it their Duty ^h *to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates*, passively at least, where they cannot do it actively, and have often triumph'd, and I hope ever will, in the Defence of this Christian Doctrine, over the Time-serving Distinctions of artful and ambitious Men.

Let not these then be found at any Time, or upon any Pretence, among the disloyal and seditious. Let them ⁱ *not come into their secrets, or their assemblies*: let them not for their honours sake *be united with them*. For how would the Adversaries of our *Sion* rejoice ? should we thus destroy our own Arguments by our Practice, and so ingloriously give up a Cause, in which we have made Christianity it self so much concerned. We are not willing therefore ever to suppose it. Plots, Conspiracies, and Insurrections, if such Things must be,

^h Tit. iii. 1.

ⁱ Gen. xlix. 6.

we would gladly leave to those, whose Principles do allow of them, whose Allegiance is occasional and fortuitous; ours rests upon a fix'd Principle of Duty which varies not. We know we are ^k *to be subject not only for wrath but for conscience sake*, and that we must ^l *study to be quiet, and do our own business*; ^m *but if any man be contentious, we have no such custom*, nor the Church we belong to.

This is the Rule we go by, so that he who errs from it, departs from us, ⁿ *walks disorderly and not as a Brother*, how ill soever he may take it so to be told. But beloved we hope ^o *better things tho' we thus speak*; we hope that as we have this Day in the Offices of the Church, solemnly repeated our Promises before God, of "all loyal and dutiful Allegiance to his anointed " Servant now set over us, and his Heirs after him: So we will indeed fulfill the same. Thus shall we make good the Principles we have so justly gloried in, take off all Misrepresentations, that may have been made to our prejudice, and convince our gracious Sovereign that we are worthy of his Protection and Encouragement. Which that we may all do, God of his infinite Mercy grant, to whom for his great and manifold Mercies and Deliverances, more especially those of this Day, be all Honour, Praise, and Glory, Now and Ever. *Amen.*

^k Rom. xiii. 5.

ⁿ 2 Theff. iii. 6.

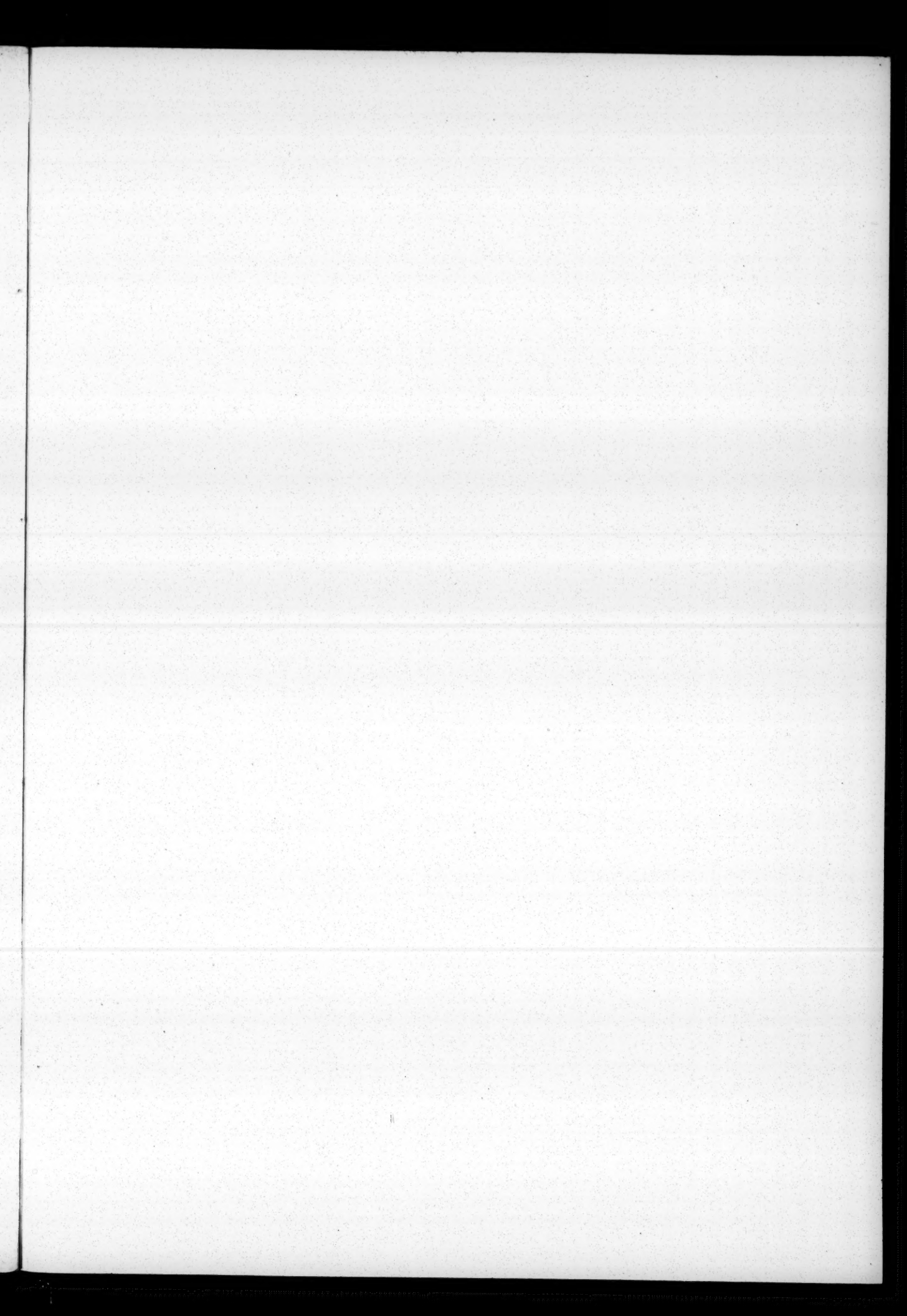
^l 1 Theff. iv. 11,

^o Heb. vi. 9.

^m 1 Cor. xi. 16.

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